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ABSTRACT

The first 10 years of operation of the college-in-prison program in Massachussetts and characteristics of participating offenders were assessed. College credit courses have been offered to inmates in adult corrections facilities by The University of Massachusetts at Boston through a program called the Higher Education Prison Program (HEPP). Analysis of HEPP enrollees between 1973 and 1982 produced three types of research products: (1) a trend analysis of enrollment; (2) patterns of program participation and performance; and (3) characteristics of the 676 male participants. Enrollment peaked in 1977 and declined after that time. HEPP offered a broad-based curriculum consisting of 97 courses during the first 10 years. About 40% of the participants entered the program 2 to 3 years prior to anticipated or actual release from prison. Another 20% entered the program when they had at least 10 or more years to serve (including life sentences) before they were parole eligible. HEPP participants could be distinguished from the average prison resident by age, educational background, occupation, and veteran status. Participants tended to be slightly older and/or better educated. Inmates who entered prison with a high school degree or more education tended to perform better in HEPP than other participants. Appendices give breakdowns of eligibility for the college program and completion of preparation, and characteristics of offenders in HEPP. (Author/SW)

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THE HIGHER EDUCATION PRISON PROGRAM: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

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ABSTRACT

The University of Massachusetts at Boston, under contract to the Massachusetts Department of Correction has offered college credit courses through the Higher Education Prison Program (HEPP) to inmates in adult correctional facilities from 1973 to the present. The present project was undertaken to assess the first 10 years of the operation of the college-in-prison program and develop a profile of the offenders taking courses through HEPP.

Analysis of HEPP enrollees between 1973 and 1982 produced three types of research products: (1) a trend analysis of enrollment; (2) patterns of program participation and performance; and (3) characteristics of the 676 program participants. Enrollment peaked in 1977 and declined after that time. HEPP offered a broad-based curriculum consisting of 97 different courses during the first 10 years of the program. About 40 percent of the participants entered the program two to three years prior to anticipated or actual release from prison. Another 20 percent entered the program when they had at least 10 or more years to serve (including life sentences) before they were parole eligible. HEPP participants could be distinguished from the average prison resident by age, educational background, occupation, and veteran status.

The report concludes with an overview of the findings and discussion of some of the trends and developments which occurred in the first 10 years of the Higher Education Prison Program. Observations are made on the utility and limitations of this type of program assessment.

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INTRODUCTION

Given that the mastery of basic educational skills is critical in meeting the demands of ordinary living and participating in the conventional economy, low educational achievement combined with a prison record presents a double handicap in contemporary society. In the early 1970s concerns about the unusually high levels of functional illiteracy among prison populations gave rise to a drive to bring training and educational enrichment to incarcerated offenders. The focus on education was not based on the belief that education was a panacea for social deprivation, a means of stemming anti-social behavior, or even a significant force in rehabilitation; rather, education was one of the few areas of a prisoner's life where prisons could intervene and make a difference (Bell, et al., June 1979: 1-6; Conrad, March 1981: 1-5). In a very pragmatic sense reformers argued that prisons should seize the opportunity to promote constructive uses of incarceration by providing correctional education. Stated another way, Conrad (March 1981: 5) points out, "the unwelcome experience of confinement is often the last and best chance that prisoners will have to engage in systematic self improvement." A few states actually instituted incentives for self improvement by awarding "good time" for participation in educational programs (Conrad, March 1981: 8).

The National Correctional Education Evaluation Project (Bell et al., June 1979) identified four areas of programming which had been introduced into correctional systems to increase academic and vocational skills of prisoners. The four program areas included: (1) Adult Basic Education (ABE) which focused on literacy and acquiring a fundamental facility with words and numbers; (2) secondary education which enabled inmates to attain the equivalency of a high school education and obtain a General Education Diploma (GED); (3) vocational

education which developed job-related skills; and (4) post-secondary education which made college courses available to inmates for academic credit or to earn an associates or bachelors degree. The early efforts to provide correctional education were financed by a mix of "soft" money from federal sources under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Education and the Department of Labor and from state administered Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grants. The funds were usually granted for short periods of time or were subject to change on an annual basis. Some of the programs described above have remained intact beyond their initial introduction in the early 1970's; others have experienced changes in funding sources or administration and shifts in focus.

The Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) offers educational services in all four areas of programming identified by the National Correctional Education Evaluation Project. A program of post-secondary education has been offered by DOC in conjunction with various community colleges and universities on and off since 1971. The Department of Correction reported that five different post-secondary institutions were engaged in providing courses to prisoners in 1982 and that 500 inmates participated in college classes in 1981 (Tables 1.59 and 6.38, respectively, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1983). One of the post-secondary education programs in DOC--the Higher Education Prison Program (HEPP)--is the subject of this study. The history of HEPP parallels the development of other correctional education programs in the 1970's (Source: 1980-1981 report of the Director of HEPP).

The Higher Education Prison Project first offered college accredited courses in a state prison in 1973. Initially HEPP was funded by a LEAA grant to the Department of Correction for a four year period, 1972 through 1975. The University of Massachusetts (UMASS) at Boston administered the program during that period. The funding was intended as seed money until UMASS could pull

together resources to continue support of the program. When the university was unable to make a commitment to the program, the DOC picked up support of HEPP, first with a series of two to six month contracts and then a full year contract beginning in 1978 and renewed each year. The DOC currently funds HEPP on yearly renewable contract basis, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston administers the program.

Originally HEPP was designed to move students through an "educational ladder" in a step-wise fashion from preparatory (remedial) college courses to college credit courses and finally to educational release by which an inmate attended classes on a regular college campus. The program emphasized a progression in curriculum, preparing the offender for education release and obtaining a four-year college degree. Currently there is less emphasis on a four year degree and education release and more emphasis on providing general educational offerings that serve as introductions to college-level disciplines. This change in focus of HEPP is consistent with the expressed goal of the DOC Division of Education Services. The 1983 Annual Report of the Education Division indicated that its mission was "to provide offenders with opportunities to develop the necessary academic and occupational skills to survive in an increasingly technological society. To this end, all programs focus on . . . .competency development rather than completion of degree requirements or attainment of certificates."

While the Higher Education Prison Program has been in operation in the Massachusetts state prison system since 1973, little is known about the nature and dynamics of the education program, the intended target population, the characteristics of the participants, or the pattern of participation. The Division of Education Services did not monitor the program during the first ten years of its operation, and a comphrehensive education plan never was formulated. The only

chronological records available for examination were the semester files of class rosters maintained by the HEEP Director. These files were of marginal utility for administrative decision-making because of their haphazard organization and the format of the class rosters. Given the limitations of the program records, the absence of routine program monitoring, and the lack of concrete educational objectives, this project was undertaken to compile a reliable body of information on participation in HEPP during the first 10 years of its operation.

The present analysis examines enrollment and participant characteristics of the HEPP program between 1973 and 1982. The study addresses the following questions.

(1) What was the pattern of enrollment over the 10 year period?
(2) Who participated in the HEPP program?
(3) What factors or circumstances influenced program performance?

The kinds of information produced from this analysis include: documentation of the trends in HEPP participation between 1973 and 1982; a profile of HEPP participants; and indicators of program performance levels. This research examines HEPP in some depth in order to provide administrators and staff with baseline information upon which to make operational decisions about the future direction of HEPP and to assess its impact and effectiveness.

The next section in this report presents the method of analysis and sources of data. The section following that summarizes the findings of the analysis; it details trends in program participation, characterizes the typical HEPP participant and identifies critical factors in program performance. The final section presents conclusions and draws implications from the findings.

PROCEDURE

In order to examine the nature of services provided by HEPP and the quality and quantity of participation in the prison program, it was necessary to construct a datafile which was historically accurate and which yielded useful administrative information. Database development had to be done restrospectively because program record-keeping was erratic over the 10-year period, and information was collected on the basis of class rosters rather than on the basis of individual inmate participants. The class rosters identified instructors, students enrolled, grades and, occasionally, the institution where the class was offered. However, record-keeping procedures made it impossible to track the progress of individual participants or make decisions about program content, program targets, or strategies for change.

To carry out this analysis two kinds of information were compiled and merged into one computerized datafile. Participants in the HEPP program were first identified from class rosters supplied by the HEPP Director for all courses taught between 1973 and 1982. The class rosters were disaggregated into person-specific lists of courses. Each class attended produced the following set of information: the title of the course; grade received in the course; correctional institution where inmate registered; and semester and year enrolled. In addition, indicators of program eligibility were entered on the datafile along with the course information. UMASS established that offenders completing a high school education or the equivalent (a diploma or GED) and passing college preparatory courses or the equivalent were eligible to register for classes in the Higher Education Prison Program. HEPP eligibility was determined on the basis of program records listing who had completed the college preparatory courses -- the prerequisites for HEPP coursework.

The record of each inmate's coursework in HEPP between 1973 and 1982 was then merged with information on each offender from the Correction and Parole Management Information System (CAPMIS). CAPMIS contains information on the personal characteristics of offenders, their criminal history, and sentence and offense classifications. The structure of CAPMIS only permits retrieval of the details of an offender's current offense. Hence, for HEPP participants recommitted during the 10 year period of this study, the sentence and offense information pertain to the most recent state commitment up to and including recommitments that occurred in 1983. When the CAPMIS and HEPP files were merged the resulting data base contained data on personal background characteristics, criminal history, present offense classification, and HEPP coursework for each offender enrolled in HEPP between 1973 and 1982.

Additional information was included on the data file for offenders who had been released and recommitted sometime after they enrolled in HEPP. The current sentence and offense information of these offenders was revised so that commitment institution, sentence, and offense corresponded to the earlier commitment during which these offenders participated in HEPP. These modifications in the database were made in order to insure some compatibility between the period of enrollment in HEPP and the period and circumstances of incarceration.

FINDINGS

This section is divided into three parts and summarizes the findings from the descriptive analysis of HEPP participation between 1973 and 1982. The first part presents information on the number of incarcerated offenders served by HEPP and enrollment in the program over the 10 year period. The next part discusses the nature of participation and program performance of offenders. This section concludes with a description of the characteristics of program participants.

HEPP Participation and Enrollment Trends

A total of 676 incarcerated male offenders enrolled in HEPP courses between the summer semester of 1973, when the program commenced, and the fall semester of 1982. Over the 10 year period offenders registered for six courses on the average. However, there was a wide range in the number of courses taken by HEPP participants; the total number of courses for which inmates registered ranged from one to 33 courses. Almost 20 percent of the participants enrolled in only one course during the 10 years of the program examined; more than a fourth (26 percent) registered for eight or more courses; and five percent enrolled in 20 or more courses. The median enrollment was 3.6 classes, indicating that half of the participants registered for three or fewer classes, and half registered for more than the median number of classes.

Participants registered for and enrolled in more courses than they completed. There was a number of reasons for non-completion including: subject matter preferences, personal or time constraints, institutional transfer, and release from prison. If a grade was assigned in a class, including a failing grade, the course was considered completed. All other outcomes were considered incomplete. For example, a student might officially withdraw from a class, drop a course before a

grade was established, or never attend after registering. Completion/non-completion was determined by the names of students listed and the final grades recorded on an instructor's class roster. While non-completions were a part of an offender's record of coursework, those attempts do not yield much information about an individual's participation in HEPP.

The average number of courses completed per participant was five courses; half of the participants completed more than three courses. The discrepancy between the average number of registered courses and the average number of completed courses was due mainly to class attrition among participants registering for more than six classes. Whereas 80 percent of those registering for up to three courses completed the number of classes for which they had registered, only 45 percent of those registering for eight or more classes completed all enrolled courses. In short, the more courses attempted, the more likely it was for an offender to drop one or more courses before completion. Overall, non-completion was not a widespread practice; the original rosters indicated that most of the participants (63 percent) registering between 1973 and 1982 never dropped or withdrew from a class before receiving a grade. While registered courses and completed courses were both useful measures of HEPP participation, the latter proved to be a more reliable indicator of the pattern and extent of participation.

Enrollment in the Higher Education Prison Program varied over the 10 years of the program studied. Table 1 indicates the total enrollment figures for each year of the study, the median number of registered classes each year, and the total number of class contacts. As would be expected, in 1973 -- the first year of the program -- enrollment of incarcerated offenders was the lowest. Low enrollment in 1973 was partly the result of courses being offered for only half the year. Enrollment in HEPP showed a steady increase after the initial start-up in 1973, peaked in 1977, and then dropped steadily after 1978. The years of highest

enrollment were between 1974 and 1978. The number of incarcerated offenders served in 1982 by HEPP was only slightly higher than the number served during six months of 1973.

In addition to enrollment trends, Table 1 presents trends in the median number of courses for which participants registered each year, trends in total class contacts, and the number of new participants recruited each year into the program.

Table 1

Participation in HEPP, 1973 to 1982

Year	Total Inmate Enrollment[a]	Median # Registered Courses[b]	Total Class Contacts[c]	Inmates Enrolling in 1st Course
1973	86	3.0	209	86
1974	158	2.5	428	118
1975	168	3.0	597	62
1976	170	3.0	466	71
1977	188	2.5	523	88
1978	173	2.0	472	62
1979	109	2.0	295	40
1980	113	2.0	219	54
1981	100	1.5	161	41
1982	96	1.0	143	54

[a]These figures refer to the actual number of incarcerated offenders served each year of the program.

[b]Median number of registered courses is rounded to nearest half course.

[c]Class contacts is based on the number of student completers in all classes offered in a given year.

All three trends reveal that 1977 was a pivotal year in HEPP participation. The median number of courses for which inmates registered, the total number of class contacts, and the number of inmates registering for the first time declined after 1977. Total class contacts refer to the amount of instruction offered in a given year; the indicator is a multiple of the number of classes conducted in a year and the number of students in each class receiving a grade. The decline in total class

contacts seemed to be the result of declining enrollment between 1978 and 1980; after 1980 the decline was more the result of fewer courses taken by each participant.

Recruitment into the Higher Education Prison Program each year did not have a consistent impact on overall HEPP enrollment trends. New recruits made up varying proportions of the yearly enrollment figures. After the initial start-up year in 1973 the proportion of the yearly enrollment which consisted of participants registering for their first course in HEPP varied from a high of 75

Table 2

Offender Participation in HEPP at Various Institutions by Year Enrolled*

Year	Norfolk	Walpole	BayState	NCC	NCCI	Total Participation
1973	86	0	0	0	0	86
1974	128	33	0	0	0	161
1975	128	49	0	0	0	177
1976	133	40	0	0	0	173
1977	135	42	20	0	0	197
1978	119	23	27	9	0	178
1979	91	0	22	0	0	113
1980	93	0	22	0	0	115
1981	65	0	26	13	0	104
1982	57	14	9	0	16	96

*The counts refer to the number of students served each year at each institution. Students may have enrolled over several years during their stay at any given institution, or they may have enrolled at more than one institution during any given year.

percent in 1974 to a low of 36 percent in 1978. Then in 1982 the proportion of new participants rose again to compose 56 percent of the total yearly enrollment.

Table 2 presents the annual enrollment figures for each of the site institutions where HEPP was offered. The total annual participants figures in Table 2 do not equal the total annual enrollment figures in Table 1. The reason for

this is that some offenders transferred within the academic year from one site institution to another and took courses at both places.

During the first 10 years of the program, prison college courses were offered continuously in the Massachusetts Correctional Institution (MCI) at Norfolk. At MCI Walpole HEPP was introduced in the spring semester of 1974, discontinued between 1979 and 1981 and offered again to inmates in 1982. Bay State Correctional Center (Bay State) and Northeastern Correctional Center (NCC) did not open and start admitting offenders until 1977. North Central Correctional Institution (NCCI) opened in 1981. The Higher Education Prison Program was offered continuously at Bay State from the time the facility opened. Enrollment at Northeastern Correctional Center was sporadic, and HEPP was not introduced into NCCI until 1982. HEPP was offered initially at Bay State, NCC and NCCI to accommodate inmates who entered these facilities after acquiring a large number of HEPP college credits elsewhere, usually at MCI-Norfolk (source: 1980-1981 report of the Director). The intent was to provide educational continuity for these participants in spite of institutional transfer. After the initial introduction of HEPP, the program appeared to survive at Bay State through resident demand but not at NCC. The enrollment at NCC in the spring and summer of 1981 was the result of a special series of courses offered on a trial basis to inmates engaged in hospital programs.

Table 3 presents the institutional population at the first of each year between 1973 and 1982 and the proportion of the institutional population enrolled in HEPP during the same year. The total and institutional columns indicate that the resident populations have generally increased over the 10 year period. However the proportions enrolled in HEPP steadily declined even at MCI-Norfolk, the institution where participation appeared most constant over the 10 year period.

Whereas a satisfactory explanation of the decline in HEPP enrollment would

Table 3

Institutional Population on January 1
of a Given Year and Proportion of the Population
Enrolled in HEPP

Institutional Count (% in HEPP)

Count Year	MCI Norfolk	MCI Walpole	Bay State	NCC	NCCI	Total Site Populations
1973	626 (13.9)	576 (0.0)	-	-	-	1202 (7.2)
1974	701 (18.2)	504 (6.7)	-	-	-	1205 (13.4)
1975	640 (20.0)	573 (8.6)	-	-	-	1213 (14.6)
1976	685 (19.4)	645 (6.2)	-	-	-	1330 (13.0)
1977	737 (18.3)	672 (6.2)	24[a] (83.3)	100[a] (0.0)	-	1533 (12.8)
1978	716 (16.8)	668 (3.4)	54 (50.0)	107[b] (8.4)	-	1545 (11.6)
1979	704 (12.9)	630 (0.0)	74 (29.7)	94 (0.0)	-	1502 (7.5)
1980	749 (12.4)	634 (0.0)	77 (28.6)	145 (0.0)	-	1605 (7.2)
1981	881 (7.3)	670 (0.0)	76 (34.2)	148 (8.8)	105 (0.0)	1880 (5.5)
1982	884 (6.4)	679 (2.1)	78 (11.5)	152 (0.0)	230 (7.0)	2023 (4.7)

a. New admissions in residence on September 6, 1977.

b. Residents on January 5, 1978.

require a complete understanding of the prison college program within the broader context of changes in higher education and the prison system, several general explanations of the decline have been offered. One such explanation suggests that the decline mirrored the downward trend in enrollment in colleges across the country which began in the mid 1970's. Another, related explanation, proposes that

the recent rise in expense of financing a college education and the increasingly scarce resources for educational funding discouraged the pursuit of a college degree especially among ex-offenders. The Director of HEPP attributes the decline in HEPP participants to competition from other post-secondary institutions offering a college curriculum in the prisons. The number of post-secondary institutions providing higher education for incarcerated offenders in Massachusetts rose from one institution in 1976 to five in 1982 (Table 1.59, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics--1983). While all of these are plausible interpretations of the decline in HEPP enrollment, none can be directly confirmed by examination of the data in this study. In the first place, evidence to support these observations draws upon facts beyond the scope of the present research and, in the second place, the issue of declining enrollment was never addressed in any of the annual reports of the Higher Education Prison Program.

Program Performance and Participation Patterns

This section examines the grade performance of students enrolled in HEPP courses, eligibility for entering the HEPP program, extent of enrollment in different curriculum areas, and the timing of HEPP participation during incarceration. Several new measures are introduced in this section including eligibility for HEPP participation, curriculum area, and course effort. The concept of HEPP eligibility was based on the established prerequisites for entry into HEPP; the other two measures were conceived as summary measures of performance and participation. Each of these measures will be discussed as they are employed in the analysis.

The average number of courses for which students received passing grades (a grade of A, B, C, or D) was four. Of the 676 HEPP participants in this study, 50 percent earned passing grades in three or more classes. In the 10 years of the program reviewed, only 30 inmates withdrew from all classes before a grade was

established; another 64 inmates never passed any of the courses they attempted. This latter group had enrolled in one to four courses and received either failing grades (F's) or incomplete grades (I's).[1] Almost 15 percent of all students passed 10 or more courses. Although one failing or incomplete grade was the average among the 676 HEPP participants, 357 inmates received no failing (or incomplete) grades.

Average grades were calculated for each participant in HEPP who had completed or had a grade established in at least one course. Based on a five-point scale with an A equal to four points and an I or F equal to zero points, the average grade was the sum of all grades received divided by the total number of completed classes.[2] In this formulation each course is assigned an equal weight in spite of the actual number of credit hours earned. While this measure is not equivalent to a grade-point average, it serves as a useful summary of a student's performance in HEPP. Overall, 50 percent of the HEPP participants received an average grade of C^+ or better. However, an average grade of B (3.0) was the most common or modal grade average among this group of students.

Table 4 presents the average grade obtained by the number of completed courses. Examination of Table 4 indicates that there is not a direct linear relationship between course effort (number of courses completed) and average grade. While average grades tended to be higher among participants completing three or fewer courses, relatively more of this group averaged failing grades as well. The number of courses failed is positively correlated with course effort ($r = .47$) and this confounds the association between average grade and the number of courses completed. A failing grade, it should be recalled, could be incurred by an instructor reporting a grade of F or an incomplete reverting to an F. Course effort has a weak positive influence on average grade when the confounding effect of the number of failed courses is controlled. The partial regression coefficient ($b=.10$) between course effort and average grade indicates that, once the effects of

Table 4

Average Grade by Total Number of Completed Courses*

Average Grade	Completed Courses 1	2	3	4	5	6–10	11 or more	Total
F(0-0.9)	49 (34)	11 (11)	13 (15)	6 (11)	3 (7)	6 (5)	1 (1)	89 (14)
D(1.0-1.9)	16 (11)	28 (27)	19 (22)	15 (27)	14 (34)	35 (30)	16 (16)	143 (22)
C(2.0-2.9)	21 (14)	30 (29)	29 (34)	23 (41)	12 (29)	43 (37)	66 (65)	224 (35)
B(3.0-3.9)	42 (29)	28 (27)	19 (22)	9 (16)	12 (29)	31 (27)	18 (18)	159 (25)
A(4.0+)	17 (12)	5 (5)	6 (7)	3 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	31 (5)
Total	**145**	**102**	**86**	**56**	**41**	**115**	**101**	**646**

*Thirty participants did not establish a grade in any of the courses in which they enrolled.

Figures in ( ) are column percents.

failing grades are controlled, each additional course increases the average grade 0.10 grade units beyond the average grade of C.[3] In the final analysis taking a large number of courses has only a slightly positive impact on average grade because participants are likely to incur more C's and D's which gradually reduce cummulative average grades above a C (2.0).

In the original plan of the Higher Education Prison Program, the in-prison curriculum consisted of two components - - pre-college and college level courses (Final Report 1973--Higher Education in Prison Program). The pre-college program, a 16-week unit of non-credit, pass-fail courses, was itself divided into two sections: basic and advanced college preparatory classes. Admission to

College Prep was open to all inmates with a high school diploma or GED (high school equivalency). Based on HEPP guidelines, performance on a standardized test placed inmates in basic or advanced College Prep or exempted them from the pre-college requirement altogether. College Prep provided intensive instruction in reading, writing and math skills and the development of positive study habits, specifically attendance, class preparation, class participation, and self discipline. Passing advanced College Prep or receiving a high enough score on the standardized test to waive the requirement was a prerequisite for admission to college level HEPP courses.

One of the objectives of this evaluation was to examine the effect of participation in College Prep on performance in college level HEPP classes. While College Prep was designed to give students who had been out of touch with school the opportunity to prepare for college level study, little is available on the extent to which these admission criteria were strictly enforced by HEPP staff. The 1982 Final Report on HEPP indicated that the standardized test for placement in College Prep was administered at the beginning of each semester but did not reveal the test outcomes or placement results.

For the purposes of this analysis an indicator of preparedness for college level HEPP courses was constructed. The indicator was based on educational attainment at the time of commitment and records submitted by the Director of HEPP listing all inmates who had completed advanced College Prep between 1973 and 1982. The educational background of some inmates indicated that they had either taken college courses prior to incarceration or acquired college credits while in prison from some other source (a different college program). Since information was not available concerning an inmate's performance on the standardized placement test, this eligibility measure was only a partial indicator of an inmate's preparedness for HEPP.

According to the records available from the UMASS prison college program 49 percent of the 676 participants in HEPP had met the prerequisites for enrolling in HEPP. Between 1973 and 1982, 205 (30 percent) passed advanced College Prep, and the educational attainment of another 129 students (19 percent) reflected prior college experience. Information on the college preparedness of the remaining 342 participants (51 percent) was not available from HEPP records. Due to the absence of UMASS records on this latter group of students, judgements could not be made on whether they passed College Prep, had the pre-college requirement waived, or had acquired the equivalent college preparation elsewhere.

In spite of the limited information on college preparedness, the three categories of participants - - those for whom there was no information, those completing advanced College Prep, and those with prior college experience - -were compared on the basis of their grade performance. The mean grade average for the entire population was 2.1. For the unknown group the mean grade average was 2.0; for the College Prep completers it was 2.1, equal to the mean for the entire population; and for the participants with prior college experience, the mean grade average was 2.5. Table 5 presents the distribution of average grades by the three categories of college preparedness. It is apparent from this table that there is very little distinction between the average grade distribution of those completing advanced college prep and those for whom college preparedness was undesignated. The former group had slightly fewer F average grades and slightly more B average grades. The lack of a difference between the two groups could mean one of two things: either (1) completion of College Prep was not a meaningful prerequisite to HEPP participation; or (2) many of the undesignated group had met the requirements for admission to HEPP but this information had not been reported. The educational background of the undesignated group revealed that 53 percent had completed less than 12 years of education. Moreover, there was no evidence to

Table 5

Average Grade in HEPP Classes by Participation in College Prep*

Average Grade	Participation Not Reported	Completed Advanced College Prep	Prior College Experience
F(0-0.9)	50 (15)	25 (13)	14 (11)
D(1.0-1.9)	81 (25)	48 (24)	14 (11)
C(2.0-2.9)	114 (35)	71 (36)	39 (32)
B(3.0-3.9)	69 (21)	46 (23)	44 (36)
A(4.0-4.9)	12 (4)	7 (4)	12 (10)
Total	**326**	**197**	**123**

*Thirty students did not complete any classes, therefore no grade was established in these cases.

Values in ( ) are column percents.

indicate that any of this group acquired more education while in prison, such as a GED, in order to become eligible for College Prep (see Appendix I).

A more reliable indicator of HEPP grade performance turned out to be educational attainment at commitment rather than participation in College Prep. Table 6 shows a steady progression in the mean average grade as educational background increases from an elementary education to post high school education. As a single indicator, educational attainment at the time of commitment seems to be a better predictor of HEPP course performance than participation in the pre-college program.

The Higher Education Prison Program offered 97 different courses to student inmates between 1973 and 1982. The content of the course offerings covered a

Table 6

Levels of Education Attainment and Mean Average Grade in HEPP Classes

Educational Attainment	Number	Mean Average Grade
8th Grade or less	80	1.8
Some High School	204	1.9
High School Graduate	246	2.2
Some College	99	2.5
College Graduate	15	2.5
Total*	**644**	**2.1**

*There were 32 participants for whom information on educational attainment was lacking or who had not completed any courses.

wide range of subject matter including humanities, math and science, and social/political studies. In order to facilitate analysis of performance in the college program the 97 separate courses were grouped according to discipline or common subject matter into 13 different curriculum areas. The 13 curriculum areas are as follows: (1) English language; (2) Western literature; (3) history; (4) philosophy; (5) Spanish, art and communications; (6) mathematics and statistics; (7) physical science; (8) economics and political science; (9) psychology; (10) sociology; (11) law and legal process; (12) anthropology; and (13) Black studies.

Table 7 shows the percentage of the 676 HEPP participants registering for at least one course in the various curriculum areas between 1973 and 1982 along with the actual enrollment figures for each year. The numbers in Table 7 represent registration figures not completion figures; a number of participants dropped or withdrew from courses after registering. Over the 10 years of this study the highest levels of enrollment occurred in the curriculum areas of English language, psychology and sociology. These also happened to be the curriculum areas in which

classes were offered most regularly during the 10 year period. The zero frequencies in Table 7 indicate that no classes in a curriculum area were offered during a particular year. Moderate levels of enrollment occurred in history philosophy, economics and political science, and law-justice studies (see Appendix I).

Examination of the patterns of offerings over the ten year period reveals that only a few curriculum areas were offered on a regular basis. Curriculum areas repeated from year to year include English, philosophy, psychology, sociology and--to a lesser extent--history, math and law-justice. Physical science courses were offered in only four out of the 10 years of the program and Black studies were offered for only two of the 10 years. The pattern of enrollment does not reflect any unifying theme or design to the HEPP course offerings. The more likely determinants of curriculum offerings appear to be either inmate demand or the availability of instructors to teach the different college courses. While the original goals of HEPP stressed integrated programming leading to a four-year degree, the pattern of course offerings over the first 10 years revealed less emphasis on progression in degree-based curricula and more emphasis on providing a broad survey of college accredited courses. It is possible that fashion and student need moved HEPP in the direction of offering a multitude of disciplines and wide spectrum of academic subject matter over the years.

Performance in the thirteen curriculum areas varied as well as overall enrollment. Table 8 presents the course grade distributions of the first and last course of all students attending between 1973 and 1982. Courses resulting in a "withdraw" or "drop" were excluded from the table. In most of the curriculum areas, about a fourth to a third of the grades earned were "B" grades. The exceptions were: 43 percent B's in language and art; 14 percent B's in science; and 12 percent B's in economics and government. The best performance occurred in

Table 7

Percent of Total Participants Enrolled in Curriculum Areas and Yearly Enrollment Counts between 1973 and 1982

	% of 10-Year Enrollment	Yearly Enrollment									
Subject Area	N=676	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
English	(45)	73	86	20	33	51	44	16	14	18	11
Literature	(27)	-	-	22	94	-	-	40	-	31	18
History	(36)	40	-	78	91	70	-	31	29	18	-
Philosophy	(35)	-	67	45	25	76	65	7	31	-	16
Language & Art*	(18)	35	11	-	73	11	-	-	-	12	-
Math & Statistics	(29)	55	5	104	-	45	8	-	8	4	-
Science	(28)	-	90	-	-	-	-	42	81	9	-
Economics & Government#	(35)	-	25	135	-	-	107	37	46	26	-
Psychology	(46)	-	76	125	30	13	87	50	53	9	26
Sociology	(52)	37	54	120	141	105	59	85	-	32	27
Law-Justice	(35)	-	44	-	58	124	67	12	-	23	28
Anthropology	(17)	32	-	23	-	44	-	-	-	-	18
Black Studies	(11)	-	-	-	-	37	66	-	-	-	-

*Spanish, art and communications were grouped together because they reflected training in communicating skills.

#Political science and economics were combined because each curriculum surveyed principles of the discipline and comparative systems.

English, literature, language and art, and law-justice studies--the curriculum areas in which two and a half times as many students earned A's and B's as received incomplete or failing grades. Black studies, anthropology and philosophy were the curriculum areas which revealed the highest percentages of incomplete grades -- those grades received when students failed to finish assigned coursework and examinations.

In addition to program performance and curriculum enrollment, this study examined the pattern of inmate participation in HEPP. The pattern of program participation is revealed in terms of two measures: (1) duration and (2) timing of participation. These two measures were selected for this analysis because they reflect patterns of program participation as well as types of inmates served by the program. The original intent of HEPP was to prepare inmates for educational release -- college and university programs offered outside the prison. As stated in the 1973 Annual Report of HEPP, "The present program . . . is not designed to serve the higher educational needs of those who are incarcerated for long periods of time, but is directed toward the person who is nearing pre-release or parole status."

The duration or length of participation is based on the number of years between the date of first enrollment and the date of last enrollment. Because the measure is based on whole years rather than months or fractions of year, it only makes gross distinction between long-term and short-term participation. Moreover, the measure may overestimate short-term participation in those cases in which the date of last enrollment is artificially determined by the termination of data collection. These limitations notwithstanding, the measure provides a general indication of the relative duration of inmate participation.

The length of participation in HEPP varied considerably among incarcerated offenders. Some participants were in the program for a few months and others

Table 8

Percent Receiving Grades A through I in their First and Last Class by Subject Matter of the Course

Subject Area	Total Students	A %	B %	C %	D %	F %	I %
English	122	(13)	(37)	(26)	(4)	(7)	(13)
Literature	71	(30)	(31)	(16)	(1)	(4)	(18)
History	64	(17)	(28)	(30)	(3)	(11)	(11)
Philosophy	100	(27)	(22)	(17)	(2)	(7)	(25)
Language & Art	28	(21)	(43)	(18)	(7)	0	(11)
Math & Statistics	62	(21)	(26)	(27)	(5)	(15)	(6)
Science	93	(17)	(14)	(44)	(3)	(2)	(19)
Economics & Government	83	(25)	(12)	(25)	(7)	(16)	(14)
Psychology	138	(17)	(33)	(18)	(9)	(8)	(15)
Sociology	203	(10)	(26)	(25)	(17)	(2)	(19)
Law-Justice	117	(22)	(38)	(21)	(1)	(2)	(16)
Anthropology	62	(19)	(32)	(15)	(11)	(0)	(23)
Black Studies	18	(11)	(39)	(22)	(0)	(0)	(28)

participated for several years. The median amount of time spent taking HEPP courses was 1.6 years. While 48 percent of the participants were enrolled in the program for one year or less, approximately seven percent stayed in HEPP for more than five years (Table 9). The long-term participation of some of the offenders is inconsistent with the original intent of the college program as stated above. Although offenders within two to three years of release were the original targets of HEPP, it is apparent that over the years HEPP has come to serve long-

term inmates as well. Of the 676 offenders in the study, 20 percent had participated in the program for four or more years.

Table 9

Duration of Participation in HEPP

Length of Participation	Number	Percent
Up to One Year	326	(48)
Two Years	139	(21)
Three Years	76	(11)
Four Years	46	(7)
Five Years	39	(6)
6 to 10 Years	50	(7)
Total	**676**	**(100)**

The second indicator of participation patterns (the timing of participation) measured the amount of time between the date of first enrollment in HEPP and an offender's parole eligibility date or release date, whichever came first. The timing of participation establishes when HEPP participation began vis-a-vis anticipated or actual release. This measure avoids some of the problems of the first measure since it is not influenced by the date of termination of data collection. At the same time it indicates something about the pattern of participation and type of offender in the prison college program.

The timing of offender enrollment in HEPP illustrates the variability in program participation to an even greater extent than the duration of participation (first measure). Over the 10-year period examined in this study, 60 offenders participating in HEPP (nine percent) had first degree life sentences and, consequently, had no parole eligibility date. Another 81 offenders (12 percent) entered the prison college program at least 10 years before parole eligibility or

release. Table 10 presents the distribution of the timing of participation for the 676 participants in HEPP between 1973 and 1982.

Table 10

Timing of HEPP Participation Prior to Anticipated or Actual Release

Years Prior to P.E. Date or Release Date	Number	Percent
Same or One Year	99	(15)
2 to 3 Years	186	(28)
4 to 5 Years	110	(16)
6 to 7 Years	82	(12)
8 to 9 Years	58	(8)
10 to 15 Years	69	(10)
16 or More Years	12	(2)
Not Parole Eligible	60	(9)
Total	**676**	**(100)**

It is apparent from the figures in Table 10 that approximately 42 percent of the HEPP participants entered the program within the expected span of time during their incarceration -- that is, within two to three years of parole. Another 42 percent entered the program when they had six or more years to serve before they were parole eligible, including those with life sentences. Clearly the population served by HEPP between 1973 and 1982 was not exclusively the population targeted by the original designers of the college-in-prison program. The number of lifers and long-term participants in the program is partly a function of the institutional location of HEPP. Three of the site institutions are maximum or medium security facilities; Bay State Correctional Center and Northeastern Correctional Center (minimum security) are the exceptions. Most likely, the presence of lifers and long-term participants in the program influenced the type of curriculum which HEPP offered. To serve long-term inmates, HEPP would have to

offer some advanced courses--rather than the introductory level as planned -- and vary course offerings from year to year. Examination of the curriculum offerings in the previous section confirms this change in program orientation. In fact, a large number of the course offerings in psychology, sociology and law-justice between 1973 and 1982 were advanced not introductory level courses.

Table 11

Average Grade and Mean Number of Completed Courses by Timing of Participation

Years Prior to P.E. or Release Date	Number or Cases	Mean Average Grade	Mean Number of Completed Courses
Same or 1 Year	92	2.0	2.7
2 to 3 Years	176	2.1	4.2
4 to 6 Years	149	2.1	5.3
7 to 9 Years	92	2.2	7.3
10 to 15 Years	68	2.3	7.2
16 Years to Life	69	2.2	8.4

* 30 participants had not established a grade in any course.

While the timing of participation revealed various types of inmates participating in the program and suggested modifications which may have occurred in HEPP over the long term, the timing of participation itself did not seem to have an impact on HEPP performance. Table 11 shows the mean average grade and mean number of completed courses by the timing of participation. Clearly, the timing of enrollment in HEPP had little or no bearing on a participant's average grade -- short term participants averaged a grade between 2.0 and 2.1, while long term participants averaged a grade between 2.2 and 2.3. However, as expected, course effort varied greatly in terms of the timing of participation. Those inmates closest to release at the time of enrollment averaged 2.7 completed courses, while lifers and long-term inmates averaged 8.4 completed courses. As an indicator, the

timing of participation is more important in terms of what it reveals about who was in the program than what it predicts about program performance.

Description of Program Participants

This section describes the characteristics of the offenders enrolled in HEPP between 1973 and 1982. The purpose of this section is to characterize the typical HEPP participant during the first 10 years of the prison college program. While the present research does not examine a comparative population of non-participants, it is useful to develop a profile of HEPP participants for baseline and future analysis and to identify salient student inmate characteristics. Appendix II presents statistics on participant attributes, custody status, offense and sentence characteristics and criminal history.

Custody and Commitment. The 10 year survey of the Higher Education Prison Program yielded 676 inmate participants in different stages of custody. By the completion of data collection in December 1983, 283 inmate participants (42 percent) remained in the custody of the state Department of Correction (DOC), 333 participants (49 percent) had been released to the street via parole, discharge or expiration of sentence, and 60 participants (nine percent) had escaped, died, been released by the courts or tranferred to the custody of another authority. In addition, 61 HEPP participants were released from custody and recommitted to DOC subsequent to their period of coursework. At the culmination of the data collection in 1983 these 61 offenders were back in prison and, hence, were treated as "in-custody" participants. The reader should recognize that "custody" is a status variable with reference to a particular point in time; it does not reflect a permanent condition.

The majority of HEPP participants were serving Walpole sentences during the

period of their enrollment in the prison college programs (see Table 12).[4] When compared with a five year average of the overall resident male prison population, the composition of HEPP participants revealed a disproportionate number of Walpole commitments. Table 12 compares the rate of Walpole and Concord commitments active in HEPP with the rate of Walpole and Concord commitments in the state prison system as a whole based on an average of five census years (1977 to 1981).[5] The Higher Education Prison Program appeared to have attracted more than its share of offenders serving Walpole sentences. The overall prison ratio was about three Walpole commitments for every one Concord commitment between 1977 and 1981, whereas 10 years of the HEPP program revealed a ratio of almost eight to one Walpole to Concord commitments. The disproportionate number of Walpole commitments in HEPP is probably a function of the principal site institutions of the program.

Table 12

Commitment Institution of HEPP Participants and Average Male Prison Population in the Annual Censuses, 1977 to 1981

Commitment Institution	HEPP Participants		5-Year Average of Male Residents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Walpole	600	(89)	2025	(76)
Concord	76	(11)	642	(24)

Profile of HEPP Participants. This section examines various social and personal attributes of HEPP participants. In some instances comparisons are made with the average overall male population in DOC custody on January first of five contiguous years.

Of the 676 offenders enrolled in the Higher Education Prison Program, 407 were white (60 percent), 260 were black (39 percent) and eight (one percent) were

Hispanic. Among HEPP participants the median age at incarceration was 26, whereas at the time of first registration in the college program their median age was 28. The difference in age at incarceration and age at registration is best explained by the fact that MCI-Norfolk was the primary site of the college program. Since MCI-Norfolk does not receive court commitments directly, inmates generally would enroll in HEPP only after transfer to Norfolk and having served time initially in Concord or Walpole.

When compared with the average characteristics of male residents over five census years (Table 13), HEPP participants revealed a comparable racial composition but were slightly older and had slightly more education. The older age at incarceration reflected the greater proportion of Walpole commitments among HEPP participants than in the prison population as a whole. Generally offenders receiving Concord (reformatory) sentences are younger than those receiving Walpole sentences. The overall educational attainment among HEPP participants tended to be higher than that of the average male resident, in part, because of the prerequisites for enrolling in HEPP. Relatively more HEPP participants had graduated from high school or had some college experience. In fact, the median grade completed by HEPP participants was the 12th grade.

The occupational background of HEPP participants varied only slightly from that of the average male resident population; relatively fewer HEPP students had been skilled and unskilled manual workers and slightly more had been employed in technical and professional positions prior to incarceration (See Table 13). The difference in employment histories of HEPP students and the general inmate population may explain the greater education attainment of the former -- technical and professional employment often require higher degrees or special educational training. In addition to occupational background, the HEPP participants exhibited a higher rate of military service (Table 13). Whereas approximately 40 percent of

Table 13

Percentage of HEPP Participants and Five-Year Average Annual Census of Prisoners with Selected Personal Characteristics

	HEPP Participants	5 Year Average Male Residents 1976-1980
Race	**N=676**	**N=2536**
White	(60)	(63)
Black	(39)	(35)
Other	(1)	(2)
Last Grade Completed	**N=676**	**N=2527**
8th or less	(12)	(32)
Some High School	(32)	(39)
High School Graduate	(38)	(21)
Some College	(15)	(3)
College Graduate	(2)	(1)
Unknown	(0)	(4)
Most Skilled Occupation	**N=676**	**N=2533**
Prof./Technical	(6)	(2)
Business	(3)	(3)
Sales, Clerical	(9)	(7)
Manual	(48)	(53)
Services	(23)	(23)
Never Employed	(5)	(6)
Unknown	(5)	(6)
Age at Incarceration	**N=676**	**N=2887***
20 or Younger	(12)	(22)
21-25	(35)	(34)
26-29	(25)	(18)
30-39	(23)	(17)
40 or Older	(5)	(8)
Unknown	(0)	(1)
Military Discharge	**N=676**	**N=2532**
No Service	(57)	(71)
Honorable	(13)	(7)
Misconduct/Medical	(5)	(3)
Discharge Unknown	(21)	(14)
Unknown	(4)	(5)

*Based on a 5 year average of the census years 1978 to 1982.

the HEPP students reported military service, only about a fourth of the overall male inmate population had served in the military. Vietnam veterans may have been attracted to HEPP and other college programs due to certain Veteran's Administration policies during the late 1970's. Between the mid 1970's to 1980 the Veteran's Administration paid incarcerated Vietnam veterans monthly educational stipends -- which covered the costs of tuition, supplies and living expenses -- when they enrolled in higher education program. Besides providing educational opportunities, HEPP apparently offered an economic incentive to eligible incarcerated veterans.

There seems to have been some selectivity in terms of who enrolled in the Higher Education Prison Program. Those attributes which tended to distinguish HEPP participants from the general male prison population were educational and occupational background, age at incarceration and military service. HEPP participants tended to be slightly older, to be better educated, to be more occupationally skilled, and were more likely to have served in the military.

Table 14 examines variations in average grade performance for different categories of race, occupation, commitment offense, commitment institution and age at the time of enrollment in HEPP. The objective of such an analysis is to determine whether variations in personal attributes and offense characteristics predict differences in HEPP performance.

Older inmates in the program appeared to perform better than younger inmates, but the significant factor contributing to this relationship was educational background. More older inmates (those over 25) than younger inmates had high school diplomas or prior college experience, and this reflected upon their grade performance in HEPP. Likewise, the more skilled the occupational background of a HEPP participant, the higher his average academic grade. This positive relationship between occupational background and grade level is probably a

Table 14

Mean Grade Performance
by Selected Personal and Offense
Characteristics

Characteristics	Number*	Mean of Average Grade
Race		
White	390	2.2
Black	250	1.9
Hispanic	6	2.5
Total	**646**	**2.1**
Age at HEPP Enrollment		
18-24	155	2.0
25-29	235	2.1
30-34	151	2.3
35 and over	105	2.1
Total	**646**	**2.1**
Occupation		
White Collar	121	2.3
Skilled Manual	145	2.2
Services	147	2.1
Operatives	165	2.0
Never Employed	34	2.0
Total	**612**	**2.1**
Commitment Offense		
Person Offense	453	2.1
Sex Offense	98	2.1
Property Offense	56	2.1
Drugs	32	2.1
Other	7	1.6
Total	**646**	**2.1**
Commitment Institution		
Walpole Sentence	575	2.2
Concord Sentence	71	1.9
Total	**646**	**2.1**

*Cases with missing information have been deleted from calculation of the means and totals.

function of the specialized educational requirements associated with technical and highly skilled jobs. Whereas average grade showed no variation according to the commitment offense of the participants, some variation in peformance appeared when offenders were grouped by commitment institution. Those with Walpole sentences performed better on the whole than those with Concord sentences. Again, this difference may be a function of age and educational differences between Walpole and Concord commitments. In fact, the median age at enrollment in HEPP was age 28 for participants with Walpole sentences and age 25 for those with Concord sentences. At the time of incarceration the age difference between the two groups was not as great; the median age at incarceration was 25 and 24 for Walpole and Concord commitments, respectively.

While educational background was strikingly similar for white and minority participants in HEPP, prior schooling played a more significant role in grade performance of whites than non-whites. Among white inmates a strong relationship existed between prior educational attainment and HEPP grade performance. Between 40 and 55 percent of those whites with a high school or college education averaged a grade of B or better in their coursework; A's and B's accounted for only about 25 percent of the grades among whites with less than a high school education. Among blacks educational background made only a slight difference in HEPP grade performance. About 18 percent of the blacks with a high school diploma or some high school training averaged a grade of B or better in HEPP; 37 percent of those with post high school training averaged a B or better. Three of the hispanic participants averaged a grade of B or better, and three averaged a grade of C or less. In the final analysis, controlling educational background did not completely eliminate the differential grade performance between white and minority participants.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined participation in the Higher Education Prison Program (HEPP) during the first 10 years of operation. HEPP is a program of college accredited courses offered to incarcerated offenders by the University of Massachusetts at Boston under contract to the Division of Educational Services in the Massachusetts Department of Correction. The research addressed three general questions:

(1) What were the trends in enrollment over the first 10 years of the program?

(2) What were the patterns of program participation and performance?

(3) Who was served by the program?

HEPP served a total of 676 incarcerated male offenders between the summer of 1973 -- when the program commenced --and the end of 1982. In the 10 years of the program studied no HEPP courses were offered at any of the prisons which house women. Consequently, the population of participants studied was exclusively male inmates. The years of highest enrollment in HEPP were between 1974 and 1978. The year of peak enrollment was 1977, with 187 inmates enrolled. This amounted to 523 class contacts in 1977 (the number of students receiving grades in all classes offered that year).

There was a steady decline in overall HEPP enrollment from 1977 to 1982. Three reasons were suggested for the decline in enrollment: (1) the decline was a manifestation of national trends in college enrollment; (2) financial incentives for pursuing a college education inside and outside prison diminshed over the years; and (3) the rise of completing college programs in Massachusetts prisons gave HEPP an increasingly smaller share of the pool of interested, eligible inmates. While each

explanation of enrollment decline seemed plausible, information to substantiate these explanations was beyond the scope of this research and not available through examination of HEPP administrative records.

Since the inception of HEPP, courses were offered to inmates at MCI-Norfolk. Likewise, the program was offered continuously at Bay State Correctional Center from the time that facility opened in 1977. At MCI-Walpole HEPP operated sporadically between 1974 and 1982. HEPP was introduced into North Central Correctional Institution in 1982 and was offered for two years at Northeastern Correctional Center in 1978 and 1981.

In the first 10 years of the college program 50 percent of the participants earned passing grades (A,B,C or D) in three or more classes. Only 30 participants withdrew from all classes before a grade could be established. Course effort (the number of courses completed by students) had a slight negative impact on grade performance. Average grades tended to be higher among participants completing three or fewer classes. Participants registered for a median of four classes and completed a median of three classes.

Admission into the Higher Education Prison Program was contingent on passing advanced college preparatory courses or passing a standardized test with a score high enough to waive the pre-college requirement. A simple analysis was conducted to ascertain whether pre-college training influenced grade performance of HEPP participants. The results of the analysis were inconclusive because of limited information on enrollment in and completion of College Prep. Further analysis indicated that educational attainment at the time of incarceration was a more precise indicator of HEPP grade performance than participation in College Prep.

HEPP offered 97 different courses to inmates between 1973 and 1982. These courses were grouped together into 13 different curriculum areas. No attempt was

made to differentiate between introductory and advanced level courses within curriculum areas. Over the 10 years of the study the highest enrollments occurred in English language, psychology and sociology -- the curriculum areas offered most frequently between 1973 and 1982. The pattern and subject matter of the HEPP course offerings indicated more emphasis on providing a broad survey of college courses than developing an integrated curriculum leading to a four year degree. While the course offerings included a mixture of introductory and advanced level courses, they were not organized into any kind of progression for degree purposes. Over the 10 years of the program examined, the best grade performance occurred in the curriculum areas of English, literature, language and art, and law and justice studies.

The research revealed various patterns of program participation by examining the duration and timing of an inmate's participation in HEPP. The timing of participation -- the amount of time between the semester of first enrollment in HEPP and an offender's parole eligibility date or release date -- proved to be the more useful measure of the pattern of program participation. The timing of participation indicated that nine percent of the HEPP participants were lifers, another 12 percent entered HEPP at least 10 years before their parole eligibility or release, and 42 percent enrolled in the program within two to three years of release. An unintended consequence of offering the college program to residents of MCI Walpole and MCI Norfolk was to encourage the participation of long-term offenders. The original targets of the program were offenders nearing pre-release or parole status; the intent was to reach inmates at a time when it was reasonable to prepare them for educational release.

While HEPP participants did not seem to represent a select group of incarcerated offenders, a few aspects of their profile did serve to distinguish them from the average male prisoner. The vast majority of HEPP participants were

serving Walpole sentences. The ratio of Walpole to Concord commitments in the average male population was approximately 3 to 1; in contrast, the ratio among HEPP participants was almost 8 to 1 Walpole to Concord commitments. Moreover, HEPP participants tended to be slightly older, have more schooling at the time of incarceration, come from more highly skilled occupations, and were more likely to report military service than the average male DOC resident.

Educational background was found to be the critical attribute which distinguished levels of performance among HEPP participants. Prior schooling explained differences in grade performance associated with age at enrollment. Participants under 25 generally had less education at commitment (over 50 percent were not high school graduates) and tended to receive lower grades in HEPP courses. Educational background also accounted for differences in grade performance among whites but not among minorities. The grade performance of blacks and hispanics showed little variation by prior educational attainment.

This analysis makes two things apparent. First, the opportunity to take college courses and pursue a degree tended to attract slightly older and/or better educated offenders into HEPP. Second, inmates who entered prison with a high school degree or more education tended to perform better in HEPP than other participants. The effects of prior educational attainment were more apparent among whites than minorities.

The original impetus behind this analysis was the need for a basis upon which to make decisions about higher educational services in prison and to manage the direction of such programs in the future. Since HEPP was one of the largest and longest running college accredited programs in the Department of Correction, it was selected as a prototype of higher educational services in prison.

Traditional program evaluations review goals and objectives and assess the extent to which these goals and objectives have been met. Unfortunately the

HEPP prospectus and annual reports did not define concrete goals or objectives -- except that of providing college credit courses within the limits of funding -- or establish measures of progress or success in the program in such a way as to be useful in a research effort aimed at program evaluation. Given these constraints, this assessment was more modest in scope. At the time this project got under way, it was not clear how curriculum decisions were made, how program participation was assessed, who were the intended targets, or how site institutions were selected. The objective of this assessment was to develop reliable data to document trends in the program, the nature of services provided, the patterns of participation, and characteristics of participants. It was hoped that this descriptive information would be useful input into decisions about program content, program practices, and program targets.

While this study presented a descriptive analysis of HEPP participation and identified a number of critical variables in the process, caution should be exercised in projecting the historical trends into the future or assigning undue significance to the role of HEPP participation in an inmate's incarceration or release. Additional research would be required to make such evaluations.

However, conducting future research on this educational program presents problems in itself. It would be difficult to construct retrospectively a matching 10-year sample of non-participants in HEPP for comparative analysis. The target population for HEPP was never clearly defined and the composition of HEPP participants and measures of success changed overtime. Using data from this study as a baseline for conducting a follow-up of program completers still serving time or released would also present problems. Tracing the educational and criminal activities of HEPP participants would be a major undertaking because the effort would require integrating a multiplicity of records with the existing database.

Much of the time on the present analysis was spent compiling the data to

conduct the research (i.e. disaggregating class rosters, tracing individual participation, and matching correctional records with university academic records). In furture research of this kind, inefficiencies associated with ponderous retrospective data collection could be avoided by timely record-keeping, continuous program monitoring and participant-based records. Good record-keeping is important not only to program evaluation, but it is critical to program planning and program management. Systematic record-keeping aids in monitoring and assessing trends and developments in programs. Moreover, the approach to record-keeping is significant in determining the type of information available for decision-making. In future program development, attention to plans and procedures of record-keeping should be as important as the design of the program itself.

FOOTNOTES

1. Instructors submit "incomplete" designations for students when extenuating circumstances prevent them from completing assigned class work or tests by the end of the course. Incompletes revert to F's if assigned work is not made up by the next grading period. The incompletes in the case of these 63 students were never changed to a letter grade; hence it was assumed that the incompletes (I's) reverted to F's for these students.

2. The average grade used in this report is not calculated in the same way as a grade-point average found on a typical transcript. A grade-point average is the sum of all weighted grades (grade-points times the corresponding class credit hours) divided by total class credit hours. For example, an A in a one credit-hour class is worth four points, whereas an A in a four credit hour class is worth 16 points. Credit hours were not uniformly reported for each course offering; therefore actual grade-point averages could not be calculated for all HEPP participants.

3. It appears that the poorer students withdraw in the early stages of HEPP participation; 54 percent of the students averaging a failing grade completed only one course.

4. Male offenders receiving state prison sentences are committed by the courts to serve either a Walpole or Concord (reformatory) sentence. A Walpole sentence involves a definite term of incarceration defined by a minimum and maximum sentence. A Concord sentence establishes only a maximum term of incarceration of two and one-half years or more; there is no minimum associated with a Concord sentence. The difference between a Walpole and Concord commitment has less to do with where an offender serves time than with the kind of sentence served and when he becomes eligible for parole.

5. In order to provide a comparison base for the statistics on HEPP participants, reference is made to the characteristics of the January first census of state prisoners averaged over five years. The January first census each year reflects the attributes of inmates admitted and in residence by the end of the previous calendar year. The census gives a point-in-time profile of the state prison population. The years selected to form the basis of the average figures were years close to the peak years of enrollment in HEPP (1977 and 1978) and census years which yielded the corresponding categories of attributes. Only attributes of male prisoners are used in calculating the five-year averages because women never participated in HEPP.

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APPENDIX I

Eligibility for College Program and Completion of College Prep

Participation in College Prep

College Prep Eligibility	Undetermined	Completed College Prep	Equivalency of College Prep
High School Graduate	124 (36)	63 (30)	100 (79)
GED	38 (11)	41 (20)	15 (12)
Unknown	180 (53)	103 (50)	12 (9)
Total	**342**	**207**	**127**

Prior Educational Attainment of Completers and Non-Completers of College Prep

Prior Educational Attainment	College Prep Completion Undetermined*		Completion of Advanced College Prep	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
8th Grade or Less	54	(16)	28	(13)
Some High School	125	(37)	80	(39)
High School Diploma	161	(47)	82	(40)
Post High School	0	(0)	17	(8)
College Graduate	0	(0)	0	(0)
Total	**340**	**(100)**	**207**	**(100)**

*Educational background of two cases is unknown.

APPENDIX I (Cont.)

Enrollment in Curriculum Areas and Mean Number of Classes Enrolled between 1973 and 1982

Subject Areas	Total Inmates Enrolled	Mean Number of Classes Enrolled
English	304	1.2
Literature	180	1.1
History	243	1.5
Philosophy	238	1.4
Language & Art	125	1.1
Math & Statistics	195	1.2
Science	186	1.2
Economics & Government	236	1.6
Psychology	314	1.5
Sociology	348	2.0
Law-Justice	234	1.6
Anthropology	114	1.0
Black Studies	77	1.3

APPENDIX II

Characteristics of 676 Offenders in HEPP Between 1973 and 1982

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Race		
White	407	(60)
Black	261	(39)
Hispanic	8	(1)
Matital Status		
Married	176	(26)
Single	361	(53)
Divorced	92	(14)
Widowed	12	(2)
Common Law	4	(0)
Separated	31	(5)
Military Discharge		
No Service	387	(57)
Honorable	88	(13)
Dishonorable	3	(0)
Bad Conduct	27	(4)
Medical	1	(0)
Discharge Unknown	144	(21)
Unknown Service	26	(4)
Formal Education		
8th Grade or Less	84	(12)
Some High School	216	(32)
High School Graduate	256	(38)
Some College	103	(15)
College Graduate	15	(2)
Unknown	2	(0)
Most Skilled Occupation		
Professional/Technical	43	(6)
Business	21	(3)
Sales, Clerical	62	(9)
Skilled Manual	154	(23)
Services	156	(23)
Armed Services	4	(1)
Unskilled Labor	170	(25)
Never Employed	30	(4)
Unknown	36	(5)

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Time At Most Skilled Position		
Less than 5 Months	180	(27)
5-12 Months	165	(24)
1-2 Years	101	(15)
2-5 Years	91	(13)
5 or More Years	59	(9)
Unknown	80	(12)
Time on Longest Job		
Less than 5 Months	159	(23)
5-12 Months	164	(24)
1-2 Years	108	(16)
2-5 Years	105	(16)
5 or More Years	64	(10)
Unknown	76	(11)
Age at Enrollment in HEPP		
19 to 23	114	(17)
24 to 26	162	(24)
27 to 29	138	(20)
30 to 34	153	(23)
35 or Older	109	(16)
Years in HEPP		
Up to One Year	326	(48)
One to Two Years	139	(21)
Two to Three Years	76	(11)
Three to Four Years	46	(7)
Four to Five Years	39	(6)
Five to Six Years	21	(3)
Six to Seven Years	16	(2)
Eight to Ten Years	13	(2)
Time Between First HEPP Class and Parole Eligibility Release Date		
Same or One Year	99	(15)
Two Years	98	(14)
Three Years	88	(13)
Four Years	61	(9)
Five Years	49	(7)
Six Years	45	(7)
Seven Years	37	(5)
Eight Years	25	(4)
Nine Years	33	(5)
10 to 15 Years	69	(10)
16 to 48 Years	12	(2)
Not Parole Eligible	60	(9)

Custody and Offense	Frequency	Percent
Custody Status as of 12/83		
In Custody	283	(42)
Transfer Out of State	7	(1)
Escape	15	(2)
Death/Removed-Other Authority	15	(2)
Court Release	23	(3)
Parole	279	(41)
Discharge	52	(8)
Sentence Expired	2	(0)
Year Released From Custody		
In Custody	338	(50)
1973 - 1974	17	(2)
1975	26	(4)
1976	33	(5)
1977	32	(5)
1978	26	(4)
1979	42	(6)
1980	36	(5)
1981	43	(6)
1982	45	(7)
1983	38	(6)
Commitment Offense At Time of HEPP Participation		
Offenses Against Person	473	(70)
Sex Offenses Against Person	100	(15)
Offenses Against Property	63	(9)
Drug Offenses	33	(5)
Other	7	(1)
Type of Person Offenses		
Murder - 1	55	(8)
Murder - 2	71	(10)
Manslaughter	63	(9)
Assault - Intent to Murder	20	(3)
Armed Robbery	197	(29)
Unarmed Robbery	17	(2)
Armed Assault	37	(6)
Unarmed Assault	4	(1)
Kidnapping	5	(1)
Other Person Offense	4	(1)
Not Applicable	203	(30)

Custody and Offense	Frequency	Percent
Type of Sexual Offense		
Rape	65	(10)
Assault - Intent to Rape	13	(2)
Rape of Minor	8	(1)
Assault - Intent to Rape Minor	9	(1)
Unnatural Acts	4	(1)
Incest	2	(0)
Not Applicable	576	(85)
Type of Property Offense		
Arson	3	(0)
Burglary While Armed	9	(1)
Burglary	40	(6)
Possession of Burglary Tools	3	(0)
Larceny	4	(1)
Other Property Offense	4	(1)
Not Applicable	613	(91)
Type of Drug Offense		
Possession of Heroin	2	(0)
Sale of Heroin	10	(2)
Possession of Syringe	1	(0)
Sale/Intent to Sell Narcotic	5	(1)
Controlled Substance	15	(2)
Not Applicable	643	(95)
Other Committing Offenses		
Escapes	3	(0)
Possession of Weapons	4	(1)
Not Applicable	669	(99)
Minimum Sentence in Years		
Two Years or Less	10	(1)
3 to 4 Years	54	(8)
5 Years	69	(10)
6 Years	42	(6)
7 Years	38	(6)
8 to 9 Years	62	(9)
10 years	61	(9)
11 to 12 Years	40	(6)
13 to 15 Years	44	(7)
16 to 19 Years	27	(4)
20 or More Years	17	(2)
Life	132	(20)
Indeterminate	80	(12)

Custody and Offense	Frequency	Percent
Maximum Sentence in Years		
Two Years or Less	8	(1)
3 to 4 Years	6	(1)
5 Years	45	(7)
6 years	15	(2)
7 Years	52	(8)
8 to 9 Years	23	(3)
10 years	78	(12)
11 to 12 Years	79	(12)
13 to 15 Years	74	(11)
16 to 19 Years	25	(3)
20 or More Years	137	(20)
Life	134	(20)
Time Between Commitment and Parole Eligibility Date		
12 Months or Less	29	(4)
13 to 18 Months	28	(4)
19 to 24 Months	45	(7)
2 to 3 Years	27	(4)
3 to 5 Years	120	(18)
5 to 10 Years	208	(31)
10 to 15 Years	120	(18)
Over 15 Years	25	(3)
Not Parole Eligible	60	(9)
Unknown	14	(2)
Year Committed		
1954-1969	38	(6)
1970-1971	57	(8)
1972	76	(11)
1973	88	(13)
1974	69	(10)
1975	79	(12)
1976	68	(10)
1977	44	(7)
1978	50	(7)
1979	48	(7)
1980-1982	59	(9)
Commitment Institution		
Walpole	600	(89)
Concord	76	(11)

Criminal History	Frequency	Percent
History of Drug Use		
None	348	(52)
Heroin	175	(26)
Marijuana	44	(6)
User-Non-Specific Drug	88	(13)
Unknown	21	(3)
Total Number of Court Appearances		
1st Offense	30	(4)
Two	51	(8)
Three	40	(6)
Four	36	(5)
Five	28	(4)
6 to 8	111	(16)
9 to 11	99	(15)
12 to 15	115	(17)
16 to 20	72	(11)
More than 20	86	(13)
Unknown	8	(1)
Number of Prior Juvenile Incarcerations		
None	541	(80)
One	61	(9)
Two	37	(6)
Three	16	(2)
Four	11	(2)
Five or More	10	(1)
Number of Prior County Incarcerations		
None	421	(62)
One	138	(20)
Two	66	(10)
Three	19	(3)
Four	19	(3)
Five or More	13	(2)
Number or Prior State/Federal Incarcerations		
None	454	(67)
One	140	(21)
Two	41	(6)
Three	17	(3)
Four	15	(2)
Five or More	9	(1)

Criminal History	Frequency	Percent
Number of Adult Paroles		
None	496	(73)
One	124	(18)
Two	31	(5)
Three	15	(2)
Four or More	10	(2)
Number of Adult Parole Violations		
Never Paroled	496	(73)
None	78	(11)
One	72	(11)
Two	20	(3)
Three or More	10	(2)
Total Prior Adult Incarcerations		
None	310	(46)
One	153	(23)
Two	97	(14)
Three	38	(6)
Four	34	(5)
Five	21	(3)
Six or More	23	(3)
Age at Incarceration		
16 to 18	26	(4)
19 to 20	58	(8)
21 to 22	82	(12)
23 to 25	153	(23)
26 to 29	169	(25)
30 to 39	153	(23)
40 and Over	35	(5)
Age at First Arrest		
Twelve or Younger	65	(10)
Thirteen	47	(7)
Fourteen	44	(6)
Fifteen	62	(9)
Sixteen	62	(9)
Seventeen	96	(14)
Eighteen	73	(11)
Nineteen	45	(7)
20 to 21	52	(8)
22 to 23	42	(6)
24 to 25	26	(4)
26 to 28	46	(7)
Unknown	16	(2)

Criminal History	Frequency	Percent
Age at First Drunk Arrest		
17 or Younger	75	(11)
18 to 19	47	(7)
20 to 21	47	(7)
22 to 24	40	(6)
25 and Over	40	(6)
Unknown	1	(0)
Not Applicable	426	(63)
Age at First Drug Arrest		
17 or Younger	42	(6)
18 to 19	66	(10)
20 to 21	48	(7)
22 to 24	52	(8)
25 to 29	33	(5)
30 and Over	17	(2)
Unknown	5	(1)
Not Applicable	413	(61)

Furlough History	Frequency	Percent
Total Number of Furloughs		
None	168	(25)
One	39	(6)
2 to 5	99	(15)
6 to 10	71	(10)
11 to 15	46	(7)
16 to 20	38	(6)
21 to 30	74	(11)
31 to 50	70	(10)
51 to 100	58	(8)
Over 100	13	(2)
Successful Furlough Outcomes		
None	6	(1)
One	41	(6)
2 to 5	97	(14)
6 to 10	70	(10)
11 to 15	50	(7)
16 to 20	32	(5)
21 to 30	76	(11)
31 to 50	67	(10)
51 to 100	56	(8)
Over 100	13	(2)
Never Furloughed	168	(25)
Late Returns (Under 2 Hours)		
None	370	(55)
One	85	(12)
2 to 5	48	(7)
6 to 10	5	(1)
Never Furloughed	168	(25)
Late Returns (Over 2 Hours)		
None	497	(74)
One	10	(1)
6 to 10	1	(0)
Never Furloughed	168	(25)
Furlough Escapes		
None	476	(70)
One	31	(5)
2 to 5	1	(0)
	168	(25)